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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS CONCERNING FREE SEED DISTRIBUTION.

Extracts from journals commenting on the recommendations of the Secretary of Agriculture in opposition to the present system of free seed distribution:

A costly humbug.—*Commonwealth*, Boston, Mass., Dec. 15, 1894.

Mr. Cleveland also indorses Secretary Morton's recommendation that the free distribution of seeds by the Department be abandoned.—*New York Witness*, December 5, 1894.

Probably most people will agree with Secretary Morton on this point.—*Journal*, Providence, R. I., Dec. 3, 1894.

The Secretary again recommends that the gratuitous distribution of seeds cease and that no money be appropriated for that purpose except to experiment stations. He reiterates the reasons given in his report of 1893 for discontinuing this unjustifiable gratuity and I fully concur in the conclusions which he has reached.—*Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 4, 1894.

The Secretary is right, and his suggestion that the money thus expended be used in the publication of practical bulletins containing information that would be of the greatest importance to agriculturists will surely meet with the approval of the latter.—*Republican*, Westchester, Pa., Dec. 3, 1894.

Secretary Morton has taken a commendable stand in declining to ask for a seed distribution appropriation for next year. A good deal of money has been spent by the Government for seed with no benefit to anybody but the Congressmen who have used the seed to "make themselves solid" with their agricultural constituents.—*Philadelphia Call* (copied by *San Francisco Call*, Dec. 5, 1894).

Since no estimate has been made for an appropriation for the purchase of seeds for the next fiscal year, it may be hoped that the plain language of Secretary Morton will be of service in forestalling an expenditure so needless.—*Oregonian*, Portland, Oreg., Dec. 13, 1894.

Secretary Morton has asked Congress to wipe out the present idiotic Government seed distribution, which costs \$250,000 a year. This (the bill proposed) will restore the original purpose which was simply to aid, when aid was desirable, in disseminating new varieties for trial.—*American Agriculturist*, New York, Jan. 26, 1895.

The Government has had much trouble with its seed business. The distribution of seed is a species of paternalism which was adopted soon after the war. For years the Government seed was a delusion and a snare. Credulous constituents who had been favored with a lot of them by their representatives in Congress planted them in high hope and waited in vain for the luxuriant yield that was promised on the wrapper.—*Journal*, Atlanta, Ga., March 27, 1895.

It does not seem reasonable that the country at large should be deprived of the conceded advantages implied in the wide distribution of rare and valuable seeds, but an impecunious and conscienceless member of Congress was sordid enough to wish to realize a few dollars at the expense of his constituents. The seed department existed before the advent of Farmer Morton, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that it will continue after he has retired to the shades of private life. It is of course praiseworthy to so conduct the affairs of the Department as to prevent the limited distribution of seeds by the process adopted by the entrapped Congressman but it must not be forgotten that even now appeals are coming up from Nebraska and from other Western States for seeds of any and every kind. It would be difficult by any known process of calculation, to determine the benefits which have accrued by the distribution of seeds from Washington throughout the country. That it has resulted in the introduction and propagation of new and valuable species of grain and vegetables, can not with truth be denied, and the benefits accruing to the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of individuals, can not be computed.—*Chronicle*, Rochester, N. Y., March 23, 1895.

Seeds have been Congressional perquisites, and the member from the rural district has always looked to the distribution of seeds as a strong card in his candidacy. * * * But just why the Government should furnish ordinary seed except because it has been the custom and because it is a leaning toward paternalism is not plain. The distribution of rare seed and the seed of newly discovered and useful plants, grains and vegetables has some reason connected with it.—*American*, Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 9, 1895.

A member of Congress sold his quota of seed outright for the neat little sum of \$75. This illustrates pretty well one phase of an evil which should be remedied by the material contraction of the free seed system. As it is carried on at present it involves not only a useless but a harmful waste of the peoples' money.—*Evening Bulletin*, Providence, R. I., March 22, 1895.

The sensational story from Washington published in yesterday's *Register* as to how Congressmen dispose of the seed furnished them for distribution by the Agricultural Department serves to show the value of the bill introduced by Congressman Latimer to provide a better mode of distribution of seed than that whose worthlessness has been so signally shown by Secretary Morton's investigation.—*Register*, Columbia, S. C., March 23, 1895.

The whole custom is a bad one, and it becomes sordidly pernicious when it is used for the enrichment of Congressmen.—*News*, Indianapolis, March 22, 1895.

We assume that the country generally is familiar with the hypothesis upon which the seed bureau of the Agricultural Department is administered. Roughly stated, the understanding is that the bureau in question forms a part of the nice little paternalistic scheme by which our Government proposes to endear itself to the horny-handed son of toil—*Post*, Washington, March, 1895.

We are glad that Mr. Secretary Morton has abolished the seed department of his office. This ought to have been done years ago. There is no more reason why the Government should give away seeds than clothes. Its principal use has been to enable Congressmen and Senators to compliment their constituents at the expense of the nation.—*Southern Planter*, August, 1895.

Since no estimate has been made for an appropriation for the purchase of seeds for the next fiscal year, it may be hoped that the plain language of Secretary Morton will be of service in forestalling an expenditure so needless.—*Oregonian*, Portland, Oreg., Dec. 13, 1894.

Some member of Congress has sold his quota of seeds distributed by the Department of Agriculture for \$75. The collection of seeds so sold cost the Government \$230. The brassiness of the transaction is in the fact that the member had the infinite greed to sell his share of seeds back to the Department. The name of the Congressman is withheld until Secretary Morton writes his annual report, when he intends to make an expose of the abuse which the system of seed distribution has come to be. If the plan ever had any usefulness, which may be doubted, it is now nothing but an expensive delusion, more of a nuisance than anything else. It is said that three more Congressmen have sold off their shares of seeds for \$150 each, and that a hundred or more members have transferred their quota of seeds to other persons, instead of distributing them among their own people, though for what consideration is not known.—*Call*, St Paul, Minn., March 25, 1895.

The Secretary is of the opinion that the seed business should be abolished. Perhaps it should, as very few gardeners would trust to Government seeds to raise a good crop. They are bought by wholesale and often a fraud is imposed upon the Government by the purchasing agents or the sellers. It is true that most of the seeds are tested, but this can only show that the seeds will sprout, not what crop they will produce. Only a few favored individually in a Congressional district get seeds at any rate, and so there is an inequality of distribution, while all have to pay the expense. It is quite likely if a test vote could be taken not one in a thousand citizens would object to the abolition of the seed business, especially if it is at last leading to scandal and corruption. It is easier to stop the business than watch the Congressmen, and one or the other must be done.—*Examiner*, Lancaster, Pa., March 28, 1895.

It is evident that the money appropriated for seed was not intended as a perquisite for the Congressmen. It was appropriated for the purpose of supplying the farmers of the country with new and useful varieties of seed, the object being to extend the cultivation of vegetables and assist the farmers in making a living. Under the circumstances, the taking of these seeds or their market value, by a Congressman, looks very like a public scandal, and we are told that the practice of doing this is not infrequent. If so, the whole system of distributing the seed had best be changed. We applaud the Secretary for his action in investigating and exposing the existing state of the seed business and hope he will institute a reform to the end that the farmers may get all that is coming to them from this fund.—*Register*, Mobile, Ala., March 22, 1895.

Secretary Morton has asked Congress to wipe out the present idiotic Government seed distribution, which costs \$250,000 a year.—*Orange Judd Farmer*, Chicago, Jan. 26, 1895.

Secretary Morton is determined to put an end to the free seed distribution of Congressmen and he is right in his purpose. * * * Such valuable seed as the Government wishes to be used for experimental purposes should be distributed through the Agricultural Department judiciously and for agricultural results, and not for favor-hunting office politicians for political effect.—*Times*, Minneapolis, Minn., Sept. 13, 1895.

While Congressmen are impressed with the faith that small packages of garden seed, that cost them nothing, are so many fishhooks for the capture of rural voters, the Governmental seed store will continue to do business at the old stand. The Government ought to go out of the seed business or into that of choice breeds—swine, cattle, and horses—with other things to follow later.—*Farm, Stock, and Home*, Minneapolis, Minn., Jan. 15, 1895.

Attention is directed to the report of Mr. Enos S. Harnden, special agent concerning "Government Purchase of Seed." This gentleman gives ample and satisfactory reasons for the discontinuance of the free seed distribution by Government to all but the Congressmen who fear for their seats should this means of influencing voters be taken from them. Mr. Harnden's suggestion that the Government's share in the matter be confined to determining the distinct kinds and varieties of vegetable and field seeds and their synonyms, and publishing results, the work to be done by the Department of Agriculture, should receive the hearty support of the horticultural press. Down with free seed distribution! It is unjust and a flagrant abuse of the people's money. Away with it! Secretary Morton has the hearty indorsement of the press in his endeavor to do away with this odious legislation. We wish him victory.—*Florist's Exchange*, New York, Feb. 23, 1895.

If the distribution of free seeds is the occasion of petty swindling among members of Congress, the plan should be abandoned.—*Tribune*, Duluth, Minn., March 29, 1895.

The custom of making an annual appropriation for the distribution of seeds through the Agricultural Department is a relic of early days when a few thousand dollars was appropriated by Congress each year in order that the American farmers might secure new and improved varieties of seeds and plants at public expense. In those early days the distribution was made through the Patent Office.—*World*, New York, March 24, 1895.

Although but little known to fame at the time of his selection, Mr. Morton seems determined that his Department shall cease to be a mere seed storehouse, and become as it was intended, a place for the dissemination of agricultural knowledge, and of practical benefit to the farmer. In following out this course, Secretary Morton seems to have kept a sharp eye over the distribution of seeds. This is an item which imposes a heavy tax upon the Government. These seeds are supposed to reach the farmer through his Representative or Senator. But the Agricultural Department has discovered that this system is creating an abuse. Members of Congress have been detected selling the entire quota of seeds allotted to them. Instead of being sent to their districts the entire allotment is forwarded to some dealer and sold at a ridiculously low price. Thus the Government is robbed, the farmer cheated, and money intended to add to the general prosperity of the country finds its way into the pockets of the Congressman.—*Item*, Philadelphia, Pa., March 24, 1895.

The matter of distribution of seeds by Congressmen has furnished a standing joke to the newspapers. Without reference as to whether the seeds will sprout or not, the Times-Union suggests that the present system of distribution be changed. If the seeds are of any value, they could more profitably be distributed through the agricultural experiment stations. Congressmen should be relieved of the trouble of a work which can not be done by them so well as through other channels. Some of the Congressmen use these seeds to make themselves solid with certain rural constituents, and this is generally about all the good they do. It is an insignificant contribution, but the Government should not make any contribution to any man's campaign fund. * * * If these seeds were distributed through the agricultural stations, an intelligent opinion could be formed as to whether or not they were adapted to the soil or the climate of the different sections of the country. Through the agricultural stations they could be intelligently distributed, and their distribution might do good.—*Times-Union*, Jacksonville, Fla., March 23, 1895.

Hon. J. Sterling Morton, the Secretary of Agriculture, is distinguishing himself by introducing all sorts of reforms in his Department, saving money and abolishing such offices as he deems useless. His last achievement is to abolish the "seed division," where for some years past hundreds of employees have been kept at work sending out packages of vegetable and flower seeds to lists of persons furnished by members of Congress. The Secretary's action is based upon a decision by the Attorney-General, that the Department of Agriculture is empowered to purchase only those seeds described in Section 527 of the Revised Statutes, viz: "Rare and uncommon to the country, or such as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of the country to another." Under this official construction, all the bids for furnishing seeds recently submitted have been rejected. The distribution was useless as experience has shown, and \$200,000 will be saved by this judicious reform. The chief of the "seed division" and the entire force of employees under him will be dropped from the rolls. Secretary Morton thus incurs the dislike of the office holders, but wins the admiration of the people.—*Times*, Albany, N. Y., July 31, 1895.

As soon as the Oklahoman was out yesterday morning a line of persons formed at the general delivery window of the post-office wanting some of those seeds. Postmaster Flattery and assistants passed them out as rapidly as possible, but the demand kept up all day. Some of the recipients kicked because the packages were not larger, others because there was not a greater variety, and others because the Government did not send out a man to plant them, but generally the donations were gratefully received.—*Oklahoman*, Okla., June 21, 1895.

The abolition of the seed department will throw ten people out of steady employment and will deprive perhaps one hundred and fifty more of a little extra work they obtained during the winter months, when it was customary to send out the bulk of the seeds. Despite the fact that this employment is taken away there are but few who will not applaud the act of the Secretary of Agriculture. The seed distribution business has long been a standing joke, and so far as practical results went it has been more or less of a farce. Besides the virtue of eliminating from Government work an almost totally valueless branch, there will be a further benefit of saving about \$30,000 a year to the Government. No one need be afraid that hereafter there will be a scarcity of seeds. They are to be obtained easily and cheaply and without regard to politics.—*News*, St. Joseph, Mo., Aug. 9, 1895.

Mr. Morton evidently knew what he was about when he declined to ask an appropriation for the distribution of garden seeds at the public expense to the constituents of Congressmen. But the Congressmen gave him a liberal appropriation in spite of his declared opposition to that method of squandering the public money.—*Times*, Minneapolis, Minn., April 3, 1895.

Secretary Morton accuses certain Congressmen of selling their quota of seeds to dealers. Judging from the quality of most of the seeds sent out from Washington, the Congressmen ought to be arrested for swindling the unsophisticated purchasers.—*Tribune*, Terre Haute, Ind., March 23, 1895.

Mr. Morton has grasped the extravagances of his bureau with the grasp of a worthy disciple of the prime old Democratic school, and he has squeezed out that grand old agricultural imposition, the free distribution of seeds by members of Congress. The seed shop is to be shut after October 1, after which Federal seeds to the agriculturists will be no freer than Federal nails to the American blacksmith or Federal ice cream to its lovers.—*The Sun*, New York, July 28, 1895.

The Secretary is making an effort to abolish the free distribution of seeds entirely, for the reason that it has grown into an evil that was never contemplated when the original law was enacted.—*Independent*, Marathon, N. Y., March 27, 1895.

Of all the good things Secretary Morton has done since he took charge of the Department of Agriculture none will commend him to the gratitude of sensible people more than the death-blow he has dealt the notorious "seed division." Apart wholly from the technical question of the legality of the annual seed distribution conducted for so many years, the use made of the seeds was scandalous. Members of Congress employed them, not for the promotion of scientific experiments, but to buy votes or allay hostility in their home constituencies. The division where the seeds were prepared for mailing was kept out from under the civil service rules so that it could be used as a sort of "emergency hospital" for the temporary relief of those poor victims of the patronage habit who were too inefficient to get employment in private life and too ignorant to pass the simplest of the examinations. It has been for a generation past a stench in the nostrils of every lover of good government, and it would have remained unchanged for an indefinite period longer but for the fact that we have for once a Secretary of Agriculture with the courage of his convictions.—*Chronicle*, Augusta, Ga., July 30, 1895.

One reason why Secretary Morton, of the Agricultural Department, is opposed to the present system of distributing seeds among the farmers, is that some Congressmen, instead of sending out their seed allowances to their constituents, sell the seed and pocket the money. Of course this is disreputable business, and any Congressman engaged in it should be sharply called down, but in what way does it condemn the system itself? A bank officer may steal money from a bank, but that does not condemn the banking system or the bank. A church member may go wrong, but that doesn't condemn the Church. If the law needs amending so as to require members of Congress to make the seed distributions as the law contemplates, or to suffer a penalty for neglecting or refusing to do so, there are enough honest men in Congress to so amend it. If the seeds were sent out in registered packages, requiring receipts from the recipients, and Congressmen to file those receipts with the Agricultural Department, there would be no danger of such violations of the spirit of the law, as the Secretary complains of. If a few Congressmen have disgraced themselves by selling their seed allowances they should be made to smart for it, but it is absurd to condemn the seed distribution plan simply because a few men have abused it. While no names are given, it is fair to presume that those members who have sold their seeds are representatives of districts in which there are no farmers or gardeners. The seed allowances might be properly withheld from representatives of such districts. Unquestionably the present system of distributing seeds is popular with the farmers and beneficial to the country. It is a means of introducing new seeds and improving crops. The agricultural industry is the largest and most important in the country, and it is not receiving any more favors from the Government than it is fairly entitled to, even if Secretary Morton does think it is.—*Journal*, Detroit, Mich., March 23, 1895.

This free distribution of seeds by Congressmen has expanded, with other abuses susceptible of legislative recognition, to proportions out of all harmony with the original design. Each Congressman now gets, on an average, 1,400 packages of flower seeds, 15,000 packages of vegetable seeds, and about a bushel and a half of field and grass seeds. These seeds are expensive, costing the Government an average of \$235 for each member's quota.—*News*, Newark, N. J., March, 1895.

Flower, garden, and vegetable seeds are the practical evidence of the worth of the Department of Agriculture to farmers, gardeners, and fruit-growers, and a quiet investigation showed that certain sections were entirely out on the deal. The Secretary actually purchased through agents the quota of some of the Congressmen, paying in one instance \$75 for the lot, and has the check as proof.—*Register*, Hudson, N. Y., March 27, 1895.

As it (free seed distribution) is carried on at present it involves not only a useless but a harmful waste of the people's money.—*Telegram*, Providence, R. I., March 22, 1895.

This incident further illustrates the absurdity of the Government system of distributing seeds of all sorts, upon the recommendation of Congressmen. It is not difficult to understand what the original idea of the Government was in inaugurating the practice, and unquestionably the motives were creditable, but with the growth of the country the practice has grown into a serious evil, the sole victim of which is the Treasury. The Secretary is right in his contention that the free distribution of seeds should cease by a repeal of the laws providing for it. It is said he will recommend this in his forthcoming message. It would be well if he should ask for an investigation. It would be instructive, though possibly humiliating, to know to what an extent this selling of seeds to the Department agent has been indulged in.—*Register*, New Haven, Conn., March 24, 1895.

Perhaps the Fifty-fourth Congress, when it meets, will give its serious attention to the object lesson placed before it by Secretary Morton, and for the sake of its dignity, if for no other reason, will proceed at once to repeal the seed distribution law.—*Evening Sun*, New York, March 23, 1895.

Having cajoled their granger constituencies with annual contributions of seeds of nameless and more or less useless varieties at Uncle Sam's expense for many years past, the Congressmen who represent agricultural communities have put on their war paint and threaten the Hon. J. Sterling Morton with summary extermination. They have already notified the loquacious agriculturist that they will challenge his right to cut off their annual allowance of cucumber and carrot seeds. A judicious distribution of Congressional seeds in certain rural constituencies has doubtless yielded large crops of bucolic favor. It is natural that the statesmen should resent the Secretary's impertinence in interfering with this time-honored method of tickling the farming constituencies and making the glad husbandman smile as he draws from the village post-office a package of cold storage peas with a new and inscrutable name as a testimonial of affectionate regard from the thoughtful M. C. Mr. Pickler, of South Dakota, is one of the severest sufferers from the seed famine. He avers that the next appropriation bill will contain a seed clause so ironclad that there will be no possible loopholes by which their seed allotments can escape them. But even if the seed appropriation is restored there does not appear to be any method by which Secretary Morton can be compelled to resume the distribution. Considering the fact that the seed privileges were either grossly abused or neglected by Congressmen and that a vast sum of money was annually wasted in maintaining a bureau for cultivating the rural constituencies, and that a great deal of Uncle Sam's bounty fell upon fallow ground, will incline the public to indorse Mr. Morton's attitude in discouraging this unconstitutional form of enervating paternalism. If the Government is to be asked to furnish seeds to the rural friends of Congressmen there is no reason why it should not provide the agricultural implements for cultivating and harvesting the crops.—*Times-Herald*, Chicago, December 9, 1895.

In his own Department he (Secretary Morton) has saved many thousands of dollars, particularly in the matter of suppressing the seed-distributing nuisance.—*Post*, New York, Dec. 7, 1895.

By all means let the new Congress make it hot for Secretary Morton on the seed distribution proposition. No issue will more clearly show the difference between Democracy and paternalism. If the bill should ever reach the President he would promptly veto it, but this will not deter the agitators from making their play. It only costs \$40 for the United States to distribute \$28 worth of seed and as an amendment in the interest of economy somebody will probably move to send money orders for the amount in lieu of the original packages of seed. In this way the farmer could buy just the kind of seed he needed and would not be compelled to raise the latest thing in cauliflower when he wanted an old-fashioned turnip. Heretofore the representatives of urban constituencies have been in the habit of giving their quota of seed to colleagues from the rural districts, but with a given number of money orders parceled out for distribution they might be less generous. The combined urban vote in Congress would naturally favor the money order scheme and by insisting upon its rights it can prevent any restrictions of the use of the money orders. Soup tickets for the cities and seeds for the country would be bound to win as a House combination. Besides the Government is able to do it. Why shouldn't Uncle Sam feed us all?—*Republic*, St. Louis, Mo., Dec. 10, 1895.

The first question to consider is, why should our Government supply the farmer and gardener with his seeds at the public expense any more than it should the shoemaker with awls and thread, the blacksmith with hammers, the fisherman with hooks and lines, the reporters with pencils, and the minister with paper for his sermons? As consistently might the lawyer be furnished his cigars, and the washwoman her soap at the public expense. * * * It is as plain as the light of day that "new and valuable seeds and plants" means the seeds of such plants, whether of grains, vegetables, or for fibers, that are new to us as an industry; something we could introduce and successfully grow, in order that we might, as far as possible, be independent of other countries. * * * It was the seeds of a new industry that were to be disseminated, and not the products of an old one. The political machine soon began to grind out different results; the Department was a place for one or more of the faithful, and they in turn began to milk it for all it was worth to them. The distribution of seeds made good campaign documents, the constituents saw they were remembered, and they were flattered. To have a package come from a M. C. was a delight to a man in the rural districts, and it made him useful at the caucus, as we have no doubt that many have found out who are now calling for the re-establishment of free seed. Secretary Morton plainly saw the trend of affairs, and has been brave enough to say, "this is the law as I understand it," and we trust the courage of his convictions is sufficient for the emergency.—*Florist's Exchange*, New York, Nov. 30, 1895.

The original purpose of the seed department was to place within reach of intelligent farmers rare or improved varieties of seeds, chiefly for the purpose of testing these in different sections of the country. The system developed into abuse. The public will say that, anyhow, the Department was not intended to be a free seed store.—*Standard*, Anaconda, Mont., Dec. 8, 1895.

Members of Congress with agricultural constituencies will move heaven and earth to compel Secretary Morton to give them garden seed for campaign purposes.—*News*, Dallas, Tex., Dec. 10, 1895.

Mr. W. E. Curtis, Washington correspondent of the *Chicago Record*, says Mr. Morton may be attacked in the House any day because of his refusal to carry out the laws of Congress relating to the distribution of seeds and other subjects on which he differs with the professional agriculturist. Rural constituents want something from their Congressmen, and seeds come the nearest to satisfying their desires.—*Chronicle Telegraph*, Pittsburg, Pa., Dec. 14, 1895.

The proposed impeachment of Secretary Morton for discontinuing the "Government seed shop" might serve a useful purpose in showing who got the seeds and how they were used.—*Public Ledger*, Philadelphia, Dec. 13, 1895.

What, we ask, is a Congressman—he with hay seed in his hair and an oaten straw in his teeth—without plenty of seed to distribute? How can he hope to keep himself solid with his constituents unless he can provide them with the seeds of cabbage and tobacco, potatoes and timothy, tomatoes and sparrowgrass? If some angry voter from the wilds of Indiana or Alabama indites a strongly worded epistle to his Congressman, swearing that never any more will he cast a vote or pull a wire for him, does the quaking member write an abject plea for another trial? Does he hasten to envelope his latest speech in a buff wrapper with his name franked on it and send it to his muttering and sputtering late porter? Not he. He at once hies (or did hie) himself to the Government granary, and by the next mail the ebullient voter would receive various packages of seeds, with the distinct belief that they were obtained and sent him as a mark of special favor. Then is the rebellious constituent pacified and mollified; then does he swear to his neighbor that no "deestric" in all the nation has such a member as theirs, and that they must "shore pull for him" next time.—*News*, Montgomery, Ala., Dec. 12, 1895.

Secretary Morton of the Department of Agriculture deserves credit for having exhibited the courage of his convictions in regard to the seed humbug. Several years ago, when the Agricultural Department of the National Government was established, it was provided that seed of rare varieties should be purchased and distributed, mainly through members of Congress, to farmers and others. The idea was a good one, perhaps, but it did not take long for the practice to become extravagant and corrupt, and in the end to fail to fulfill the original purpose. Seeds were purchased in large quantities by speculators, and sold to the Government at high prices without competition. These were composed chiefly of varieties quite common in this country, and often of such quality as no seedsman that valued his reputation would sell to customers. But Congressmen were glad always to get something to send to their constituents. Farmers appreciated a few packages of seed from their Congressman; it showed that the latter remembered them. The Congressman appreciated it, because it enabled him to send something free of cost to his constituents, showing that he remembered them. Thus the extravagance not only continued, but it grew steadily. * * * It happened that much of the seed distributed from Washington was absolutely worthless, and farmers ceased to depend upon it.

Secretary Morton has now concluded to abolish the seed department on the first of October next. This year he refused to use much of the money appropriated by Congress for seed distribution. He told Congress in his report that he did not want it; still the money was forced upon him, but he did not expend it to the full extent. This was an extraordinary occurrence, and does credit to the Secretary of Agriculture. The seed humbug has at last come to an end.—*Commercial*, Cincinnati, Ohio, July 31, 1895.

Another abuse, formerly existing within the Department itself, but reformed by the present Secretary, immensely to his credit.—*The Cultivator and Country Gentleman*, Albany, N. Y., Nov. 28, 1895.

Secretary Morton renews his fight against the free seed humbug that costs \$160,000 a year.—*American Agriculturist*, New York City.

Mr. Morton, Secretary of Agriculture, keeps hammering away at the ridiculous humbug of compelling the Department to distribute yearly millions of packages of ordinary seeds gratis and promiscuously. His persistence in urging Congress to abolish the absurd practice deserves the fullest success, and I have not yet despaired of finally seeing Congress take a common-sense view of the matter, and act on his recommendation.—*Farm and Fireside*.

The Secretary of Agriculture will be indorsed by all sensible people in his opposition to giving away seeds.—*World*, New York City.

Humbug.—*New England Homestead*, Boston, Mass.

The Secretary of Agriculture will be indorsed by the country in his determination to put a stop to the indiscriminate giving away of seeds, etc., to those who have no use for them, and who only obtain them to promote their political advantage. * * * It is a custom which will be more honored in the breach than in the observance. The United States Government can not become a partner in the deceptive and expensive bunco game worked by so many Congressmen.—*Courier*, Syracuse, N. Y.

Secretary Morton has taken a commendable stand in declining to ask for a seed distribution appropriation for next year.—*Philadelphia Call*.

The present way of distributing seeds from Washington is nothing but a farce.—*Dakota Farmer*.

If seed is to be given away gratuitously at all it should be done under the direction of the several experiment stations.—*News*, Waterloo, N. Y.

Secretary Morton, in his annual report, one of the most sensible and practical ever issued from a Government press, suggests that "if in a paternal way it is the duty of the Government to distribute anything gratuitously, are not new ideas of more permanent value than old seed?" The question answers itself.—*Democrat*, Springfield, Ohio.

A good idea. The seed business as conducted by the Government, if it ever had any merit, has been little better than a farce for several years.—*World*, Cleveland, Ohio.

We are pleased to note Secretary Morton's determination to transfer seed distribution to the experiment stations, where the dissemination of new and valuable varieties could be properly conducted in place of the humbug now practiced.—*American Agriculturist*.

The *Farm and Fireside* speaks of the ridiculous humbug of compelling the Department of Agriculture to distribute yearly millions of packages of ordinary seeds gratis and promiscuously.

The following journals express in a general way approval of the Secretary's recommendations, including the abolition of the free seed distribution :

<i>Tribune</i> , Scranton, Pa.	<i>Herald</i> , Boston, Mass.
<i>Journal of Commerce</i> , New York, N. Y.	<i>Herald</i> , Baltimore, Md.
<i>Express</i> , Easton, Pa.	<i>Union</i> , Schenectady, N. Y.
<i>Star</i> , Wilmington, N. C.	<i>Morning Sun</i> , Nebraska.
<i>Press and Knickerbocker</i> , Albany, N. Y.	<i>Herald</i> , New York, N. Y.
<i>Freeman</i> , Kingston, N. Y.	<i>Herald</i> , Chicago, Ill.
<i>Despatch</i> , Pittsburg, Pa.	<i>Staats Zeitung</i> , New York.
<i>Record</i> , Philadelphia, Pa.	<i>State Journal</i> , Lincoln, Nebr.
<i>Mail and Express</i> , New York, N. Y.	<i>News</i> , Bangor, Maine.
<i>Times</i> , Lebanon, Pa.	<i>Register</i> , Hudson, N. Y.
<i>Florida Agriculturist</i> .	<i>Palladium</i> , New Haven, Conn., Dec. 8, 1894.
<i>Courier</i> , Buffalo, Minn., Nov. 30, 1894.	<i>News</i> , Birmingham, Ala., Nov. 3, 1894.
<i>News</i> , Buffalo, N. Y.	<i>Times</i> , Little Falls, N. Y., Dec. 13, 1894.
<i>Call</i> , St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 30, 1894.	<i>Register</i> , Hudson, N. Y., Dec. 1, 1894.
<i>True American</i> , Trenton, N. J., Dec. 8, 1894.	<i>Journal</i> , Providence, R. I., Dec. 3, 1894.
<i>Evening Times-Union</i> , Jacksonville, Fla.	<i>Bradstreets</i> , New York, N. Y., Dec. 1, 1894.
<i>Democrat</i> , Beatrice, Nebr.	

EXTRACTS FROM RESOLUTIONS AND REPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS.

Extracts from report adopted by the State Grange of Maine :

In his preliminary report for 1894, Secretary Morton renews a recommendation made in 1893 that the distribution of seed at public expense be utterly abolished. In the opinion of your committee, this recommendation should receive the approval and support of this body.

It appears that in the year ending June 30, 1894, over nine and one-half millions of packages of seeds were distributed, at an expense of over one hundred, and twenty-seven thousand dollars, nearly one-half of which was paid for the cost of distribution. This is certainly an utter waste of a large sum of money unless we regard it as necessary that Congressmen shall be granted this perquisite in order that they may assist in maintaining the kitchen garden of their constituents.

As a matter of fact this seed distribution as now conducted is a proper matter for ridicule because it has little reference to the study and introduction of new varieties, but consists chiefly of sending out old varieties, whose value or lack of value is already well established. The money is expensively used to make gifts, which are neither valuable nor very much appreciated. A free distribution of paper, pens, and ink would be just as sensible.

The Secretary recommends that the experiment stations be given a small additional appropriation to aid in the dissemination of valuable new varieties of seeds. In that way, or some other, this abuse should be remedied and your committee believes that this matter could well be made the subject of a special resolution by this body.

Received December 17, 1894, from the secretary of the Maryland State Grange :

Resolved, That we, the members of the Maryland State Grange, do hereby indorse the attitude of the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in regard to the seed division of his Department, and approve of the policy which he has outlined in his last annual report of placing the work in the hands of the experiment stations as we believe that by so doing the work of distribution of seeds would far better meet the wants of the farmers and be fruitful of more good than by the methods at present pursued.

Resolved further, That we extend to him our appreciation and support in his endeavors to make the change, and also make the attitude of this body toward the measures known to the Maryland Congressmen.

At a meeting of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society held in Horticultural Hall, Boston, Mass., December 1, 1894, the following report was presented and adopted relative to the distribution of seeds by the U. S. Department of Agriculture :

Whereas more than half a century ago improved varieties of seed were sent out by the official then in charge of that work at Washington to farmers and gardeners of the country in order that such seed might be tested and their practical value ascertained, either over others already in use or as to their value for introduction and cultivation ; and,

Whereas we recognize that the present distribution of seeds from the Department of Agriculture does not meet the original intention as herein indicated, and has grown to unreasonable dimensions (and has become a gratuitous distribution of seeds that the recipient often is unwilling to use), the cost of such distribution in 1893 having been \$160,000,

We, the members of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, assembled by our representatives in our hall at Boston, respectfully recommend to the Congress of the United States that the present method of, and appropriation for, the distribution of seeds be abolished, etc.

The following resolution was passed by Pomona Grange at Westfield, N. Y., which was in session on December 12 and 13, 1895 :

Resolved, That we commend the Secretary of Agriculture for suppressing the annual distribution of seeds.

FREE-SEED DISTRIBUTION.

STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AT THE JOINT MEETING OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES OF AGRICULTURE, JANUARY 15, 1896.

From a special report of the Chief of the Division of Accounts and Disbursements of this Department, received December 18, I learn that only a very small part of the appropriation for this fiscal year was paid out for the services of employees in the Seed Division who were engaged until the first of October in closing up this business. The report shows that there has been used from the appropriation the following amounts:

For the purchase and distribution of valuable seeds, fiscal year 1896 (\$130,000):

1895.	To whom paid.	For what purpose.	Amount.
July 31.....	Enos S. Harnden et al.....	Salaries for July, 1895.....	\$541.30
August 31.....	Enos S. Harnden et al.....	Salaries for August, 1895.....	541.30
September 30.	Enos S. Harnden et al.....	Salaries for September, 1895....	527.40
Total.....			1,610.00

For the portion thereof permitted to be used for Farmers' Bulletins, fiscal year 1896 (\$50,000):

1895.	To whom paid.	For what purpose.	Amount.
July 31.....	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for July, 1895.....	\$1,322.60
August 31.....	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for August, 1895.....	1,332.75
September 18.	The Public Printer.....	10,000 copies Bulletin No. 7.....	98.75
September 18.	The Public Printer.....	40,000 copies Bulletin No. 29....	566.44
September 24.	The Springfield Envelope Co..	Envelopes.....	270.20
September 30.	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for September, 1895....	1,243.20
October 21.....	Easton & Rupp.....	Twine.....	15.00
October 24.....	The Public Printer.....	Printing Bulletin No. 30.....	164.76
October 24.....	The Public Printer.....	Printing Bulletin No. 31.....	411.62
October 31.....	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for October, 1895.....	324.70
November 15.	The White, Corbin & Co.....	Envelopes.....	917.60
November 30.	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for November, 1895....	653.00
Total.....			7,820.62

For printing, etc., fiscal year 1896 (\$5,400):

1895.	To whom paid.	For what purpose.	Amount.
September 18.	The Public Printer.....	Services and material July 1 to August 14, 1895.....	\$2,210.88

The above statement of expenditures shows but three items charged against "that part of the act in question which appropriates \$130,000 for the purchase of seeds for gratuitous promiscuous distribution" for the year 1896, aggregating \$1,610. These three items are, as explained above, for labor performed during the period from July 1 to September 30, 1895.

From July 1 to November 30, 1895, \$7,820.62 was paid on account of the preparation, printing and publishing of Farmers' Bulletins for the current fiscal year. It will thus be seen that of the \$130,000 appropriated for the "purchase and distribution of valuable seeds" for the fiscal year 1896, the sum of \$128,390 remains unexpended.

Finding that Farmers' Bulletins would still have to be prepared, printed, published, and distributed, "as seeds are distributed," and that this must be done by the officer provided for on the statutory roll of the "Division of Seeds" in the act making appropriation for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year

ending June 30, 1896, the Chief of this Division and a few of the persons employed therein have been continued upon this roll for the purpose of distributing these documents in accordance with the orders of Members and Delegates in Congress. This was only done after receiving the report of the "Committee on the Distribution of Publications" (Exhibit A), and certain opinions from the Comptroller of the Treasury (Exhibit B), authorizing the continuance of the expenditure for this purpose, copies of which are submitted herewith.

It only remains to state "why such seeds have not been purchased under said appropriation in accordance with existing statutes relating thereto."

Beginning in 1839 with an appropriation to the Patent Office of \$1,000 for collecting and distributing rare and improved varieties of seeds, prosecuting agricultural investigations, and procuring agricultural statistics, the appropriations for seed distribution have grown until the appropriation for the present fiscal year amounts to \$199,120, including the statutory roll for the Division of Seeds and the expenses of printing for this Division. The act says that the "Secretary of Agriculture may use not to exceed \$50,000 of the amounts herein appropriated for the preparation, printing, and publishing Farmers' Bulletins." Deducting this, the total appropriation for the purchase and distribution of seeds for the present fiscal year is \$149,120.

Down to the year 1865, the seeds distributed were purchased out of the general fund above described, so that we have no accurate information at hand with regard to the amount used for this purpose prior to that year, but since 1864 a separate appropriation has been made annually for the purpose of buying and distributing seed, as shown in the following table:

No specific appropriation for seeds was made prior to the fiscal year 1865. The appropriations were for "collection of agricultural statistics, etc., and purchase, etc., of seeds."

Year.	Appropriation.	Expenditure.	Balance.
1865	\$61,000.00	\$61,000.00	.....
1866	70,165.90	70,165.90	.....
1867	115,200.00	115,200.00	.....
1868	85,200.00	85,200.00	.....
1869	20,000.00	20,000.00	.....
1870	20,000.00	18,981.33	\$1,018.67
1871	30,000.00	28,805.17	1,194.83
1872	45,000.00	45,000.00	.....
1873	55,000.00	55,000.00	.....
1874	65,000.00	64,904.89	95.11
1875	95,000.00	94,719.83	280.17
1876	65,000.00	65,000.00	.....
1877	85,000.00	80,000.00	5,000.00
1878	75,000.00	74,579.33	420.67
1879	75,000.00	75,000.00	.....
1880	75,000.00	75,000.00	.....
1881	102,160.31	102,157.48	2.83
1882	100,000.00	99,991.53	8.47
1883	80,000.00	80,000.00	.....
1884	75,000.00	74,986.48	13.52
1885	100,000.00	99,983.82	16.18
1886	100,000.00	99,980.24	19.76
1887	100,000.00	99,998.37	1.63
1888	103,000.00	102,587.55	412.45
1889	104,200.00	104,168.73	31.27
1890	104,200.00	104,174.55	25.45
1891	105,400.00	105,090.94	309.06
1892	105,400.00	104,920.35	479.65
1893	135,400.00	134,908.27	491.73
1894	135,400.00	119,664.90	15,735.10
1895	165,400.00	120,445.15	44,954.85
1896	185,400.00	14,312.80	171,087.20
Total.	2,837,526.21	2,595,987.61	241,538.60

The figures for 1895 include \$35,400 appropriated and \$30,567.99 expended for Farmers' Bulletins and printing, while those for 1896 include \$55,400 appropriated and \$12,702.80 expended for the same purposes. The expenditures for 1896 are for the period from July 1, 1895, to December 31, 1895, inclusive.

This enormous purchase and distribution of seeds, costing the Government \$2,581,674.81 in twenty years, was made under section 527 of the Revised Statutes. This section reads as follows:

The purchase and distribution of seed by the Department of Agriculture shall be confined to such seeds as are rare and uncommon to the country, or such as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our country to another; and the purchase or propagation and distribution of trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings shall be confined to such as are adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interest of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States.

Every annual appropriation act has read "For the purchase, propagation, and distribution, *as required by law*, of valuable seeds," etc.

Under this statute the Commissioner of Patents, the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the Department of Agriculture for 56 years have sought "such seeds as are rare and uncommon to the country, or such as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our country to another" in all foreign countries and in all parts of this country, and have purchased freely almost every seed or plant that offered the slightest appearance of novelty or prospect of value and have distributed them most liberally through Members and Delegates in Congress.

Through our representatives all foreign countries have been searched and through our own seed growers and horticulturists the resources of our own country have been completely canvassed. The law has always been construed most broadly, and the money expended most liberally.

When the present Secretary of Agriculture came into office, he directed that lists be made of all the seeds, plants, shrubs, vines, etc., which had been distributed to parts of our country in all the years previous, and that, guided by these lists, the Seed-Purchasing Agent should deliberately proceed to find such seeds, plants, shrubs, vines, etc., as had not been previously liberally distributed in all parts of our country. Through the aid of the State Department and its agents in foreign countries, every part of the world has contributed its share for the distribution of seeds and plants which promised to be of value to our people. Great pains were taken thus to find genuinely new, useful, and valuable things "rare and uncommon to the country and adapted to general cultivation, or to promote the general interest of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States," and they were carefully distributed to every portion of the country where there was the slightest hope that they might prove useful. In this way it became each year more and more difficult to get things which came up to the requirement of the law. The tremendous pressure for quantity to supply Congress has led to the purchase of seeds, etc., on very imperfect evidence as to novelty and value. During recent years, therefore, the seeds obtained were of very doubtful value to the people of the country. Experience has shown that the vast majority of the so-called new seeds and plants offered by seedsmen or horticulturists are merely old varieties under new names. The distribution has, therefore, become very disappointing and unsatisfactory, growing necessarily more and more so as it was continued, extended in area, and increased in volume.

This was the necessary logical result of such a distribution under this law. There are only a certain number of rare and uncommon seeds, or useful or valuable trees, shrubs, vines, etc., in the world, and their collection and distribution cannot, therefore, be continued indefinitely. In fact, the more carefully and zealously the collection and distribution is made, the earlier must it come to a conclusion. For many years the purchases of seed by this Department were only possible under the very liberal construction of the broad provision for "such seeds as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our country to another." During recent years almost no seed rare or uncommon to this country has been found by this Department anywhere in the world. The distribution during the last three years was kept up, therefore, through great difficulty and with growing doubt as to its legality. Every seed that could be found anywhere offering a

reasonable prospect of usefulness in any portion of the country has been purchased and liberally distributed.

The extent and liberality of the distribution which has been made by the present Secretary of Agriculture will be shown by the following figures, taken from the reports of the Seed Division. During the three fiscal years July 1, 1889, to July 1, 1892, under his predecessor in office, there were distributed the following :

	Kinds.	Varieties.	Packages to Congressmen.	Total packages distributed.
July 1, 1889, to June 30, 1890	23	520	4,459,773	5,605,246
July 1, 1890, to June 30, 1891	22	413	4,157,931	6,013,613
July 1, 1891, to June 30, 1892	20	426	4,542,177	5,982,989
Total, 1889 to 1892	65	1,355	13,159,886	17,551,848

For the three fiscal years between July 1, 1892, to July 1, 1895 :

	Kinds.	Varieties.	Packages to Congressmen.	Total packages distributed.
July 1, 1892, to June 30, 1893	18	387	6,215,781	7,704,943
July 1, 1893, to June 30, 1894	25	309	8,385,120	9,555,318
July 1, 1894, to June 30, 1895	25	288	7,209,089	9,528,653
Total, 1892 to 1895	68	984	21,809,990	26,788,914
Increase for last period	3	.....	8,650,104	9,237,066

In the three years of his term of office, the present Secretary had distributed to Members of Congress 8,650,104 packages more than did his predecessor in office. In doing this he believes that he went to the utmost limit of the authority given him in the statute.

Under the old plan, which prevailed in this Department before this year, the noncompetitive offers of seedsmen and horticulturists were sifted, and the most reliable and promising varieties were taken upon the representations of their producers as to their rarity and value. The fact is, that the people in every portion of this country have, through the instrumentalities of this Department and our enterprising seedsmen, already secured nearly all the vegetable and field seeds, plants, trees, etc., that are well adapted to their peculiar soils and climate.

After testing the seed purchased in this way in the last three years in the field and in the garden, our correspondents and the experiment stations assure us that very few of them are really rare, uncommon, or specially valuable.

At least one-half of the so-called new varieties sent to any particular section of the country have proved comparatively unsuitable and often worthless, while the other half proved to be old varieties already well known there. Although diligently carried out, the seed distribution of the last three years has thus been extremely unsatisfactory to the people of the country as well as to this Department. By inducing interested people to spend their labor upon things that were represented to be new, but proved either common or unsuitable, the Government has imposed upon them, and has been the occasion of no little loss of the rent of land, money, time, and labor of the people.

New varieties of seeds and plants where there are any can be obtained at the present much more readily by skilled, practical botanists and horticulturists than by this Department, and it is a fact that when such commercial agencies find anything new, they are not apt to sell it to the Department of Agriculture at any price. A single year's free distribution ends their trade in it. On the other hand it is generally stated and believed that unscrupulous dealers make a business of selling the Department of Agriculture their old seeds and their surplus stock of failures.

The Department of Agriculture has no farm or other arrangement for testing the real value of so-called rare and uncommon plants, and could not do so for all sections of the country if it had.

Being thoroughly convinced that the end of the legitimate purchase and distribution of seeds under the law, as cited, had been reached, and perhaps far passed, and being entirely unable to find any seed which would come up to its requirements by the methods which had been pursued in the past, namely, by correspondence with seedsmen and inquiries through the representatives of the State Department abroad, the Secretary of Agriculture, on the 18th of April, 1895, addressed a communication to the Honorable Attorney-General of the United States, a copy of which, with his reply, is inclosed herewith, in which he asked for an opinion as to whether (1) "The Secretary of Agriculture can legally purchase any other seeds than those described in Section 527 of the Revised Statutes," and whether (2) "It would be proper and lawful for the Secretary of Agriculture * * * to advertise for proposals to furnish the Department of Agriculture with seeds, bulbs, trees, vines, cuttings, and plants," etc., in accordance with Section 3709 of the Revised Statutes, which requires that "All purchases and contracts for supplies or services in any of the Departments of the Government, except for personal services, shall be made by advertising a sufficient time previously for proposals respecting the same," etc.

The reply of the Attorney-General informed the Secretary of Agriculture that (1) "The seeds purchasable under the act of March 2, 1895, are limited to those described in section 527 of the Revised Statutes—there being no reasonable ground for claiming that the act of March 2, 1895, operates, or was intended to operate, as a repeal of the earlier statute;" (2) that, "If not obligatory upon the Secretary of Agriculture to purchase seeds, trees, etc., conformably to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes, it is certainly competent for him to make the purchases conformably to said statute, the right to reject any and all bids being reserved," etc.

In accordance with this construction, the Secretary of Agriculture immediately caused an advertisement for seeds, plants, trees, etc., stating the requirements of the Department of Agriculture in the language of the Statute itself, to be published in the lawful number of papers, and to be mailed to all the seedsmen, horticulturists, and others whose addresses were on file in this Department.

Since the act of Congress requires "that the seeds allotted to the Senators and Representatives for distribution in the districts embraced within the twenty-fifth and thirty-second parallels of latitude shall be ready for delivery on the 10th day of January, or at the earliest practicable time thereafter," and since all Representatives expect their seeds to be ready early in February in order that they may be forwarded to the people in time for their early gardens, it was necessary to stipulate in this advertisement that all seeds should be delivered in Washington on or before the 1st of November. Under the well-known rule of moving the seed from one section of the country to another, those grown in the extreme North are frequently desired for planting in the extreme South. This arrangement gave the Department only from seventy to one hundred days in which to clean, test, sort, pack, and label the seed for distribution to Members of Congress, therefore it was not considered possible under the law to grant a longer time for delivery of the seed.

In order that the Department might treat their bids intelligently, it was required that the "persons submitting bids should specify the kind and varieties, with full description of each variety of seeds and plants upon which they desire to submit bids and the quantities they are prepared to contract for," etc. The bids were to be received by the Secretary of Agriculture until 2 p. m., July 1, 1895.

On July 1, the Secretary appointed Messrs. E. S. Harnden, F. L. Evans, and J. B. Bennett, of the Department of Agriculture, "a board to open and examine bids for supplying the United States Department of Agriculture during the fiscal year 1896 with 'seeds,' " etc., as required by law, in accordance with this advertise-

ment (Exhibit —). This board opened and carefully examined the bids which had been received at the appointed time. They found only three which, in form, came up to the requirements of the advertisement. These bids are submitted herewith, together with the indorsements of the board thereon, and the final report of the board.

Messrs. Peter Henderson & Co. offer roses, cannas, "flower seed novelties and specialties in vegetable seeds," and two kinds of grass seeds. The board found that their bid was deficient in description; that the flower and vegetable seeds offered were not rare; and that the only farm or field seeds offered were two grasses. These were referred to the Agrostologist of the Department of Agriculture, who submitted the following opinion with regard to them:

Bromus inermis, awnless brome-grass, was fully described and its agricultural characters and value pointed out in German publications more than a hundred years ago. It was frequently mentioned in English agricultural works in the early years of the present century. It was introduced into this country nearly twelve years ago. It has been widely grown in this country experimentally, and the seed has been offered for sale by our leading seedsmen for a number of years.

Cynodon dactylon, Bermuda or wire grass. This grass is very widely distributed in tropical and subtropical countries throughout the world, and has been known since prehistoric times. In the parts of this country where this grass is most valuable, it is known to almost every man, woman, and child, either as a weed or good hay or pasture grass. The cotton planters of the South look upon this grass as one of the very worst of weeds. The grass is best propagated by root cuttings or sets.

The vegetable seeds offered in this bid were all such as the Department had previously distributed, and could not, therefore, be called rare or uncommon in the opinion of the board. Nothing was offered that was "adapted to general cultivation or to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States." This bid was, therefore, rejected as a whole.

The next bid was that of J. C. Vaughan, of Chicago. He offers a number of "rare and useful flower seeds" (to quote his language) and three varieties of vegetable seeds. The flower seed include such things as "Giant Paris Pansy" at \$25 per pound; "Lobelia Erinus," \$35 per pound; "New Double Morning Glory," \$40 per pound; "White Branching Aster," \$36 per pound; "Chinese Primroses," \$60 per pound; "Petunia White Star," \$65 per pound, and "Chabaud Carnation," at \$128 per pound. The board appears to have promptly decided that the flower seeds at these prices were not "adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States." The three varieties of vegetable seeds offered were "New Mangel, Erfurt Model;" "Turnip, New Scarlet Kashmir;" and "New Victoria Spinach." The board reported that these "are not new, rare, or unique." The bid was also deficient in that the quantity of each that could be supplied was not mentioned. It is likely that a confession that they had a large quantity of the above flower seed at the above prices would render it impossible for them to sell any of them.

The bid of Messrs. J. M. Thornburn & Co., of New York, includes a variety of vegetable, but only three specimens of field or farm seeds, viz: Havana Tobacco seed, Bermuda Grass seed, and 25 bushels No. 1 Wheat, "by parentage half wheat, half rye, at \$3 per bushel."

This bid was found deficient in descriptive matter: the varieties are not new or rare; every kind and variety of seed mentioned in it, with the exception of eleven items out of 65 offered, have already been distributed by this Department, and of these eleven items none are stated to be rare or uncommon. It was, therefore, rejected also.

This entire lot of bids, although it includes many high-priced flower seed and so-called new varieties of kitchen garden plants, thus includes only four kinds of field or farm seed, viz: Brome grass, Bermuda grass, and Havana tobacco, and one variety of wheat. Two bidders offer the Bermuda grass, or wire grass, seed. The total amounts of field seed offered were as follows:

4,000 pounds awnless-brome grass seed, at 14 cents per pound.....	\$560	
500 pounds Bermuda, or wire grass, seed, at 80 cents per pound.....	400	
300 pounds Bermuda, or wire grass, seed, at 8 cents per pound.....	300	
		\$1,260
100 pounds Havana tobacco seed, at \$1.50 per pound.....	150	
25 bushels or 1,500 pounds Carman, No. 1 wheat, "by parentage half wheat, half rye," at 5 cents per pound.....	75	
		225
6,400 pounds.....		1,485

This would under the law have been less than ten pounds of field and farm seed to each Senator, Representative, and Delegate in Congress if every pound offered had been bought.

Having received no bids that came up to the requirements of the statutes and offered anything worthy of consideration the board rejected them all and submitted the following report :

THE HONORABLE,

THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

Washington, D. C., July 6, 1895.

SIR: The undersigned board appointed by you on July 1, 1895, to open and examine bids for seeds to be furnished this Department for distribution according to law, during the fiscal year ending July 1, 1896, have the honor to report that we have opened and examined the bids received and find that the same do not meet the requirements of the advertisement as printed, and, therefore, respectfully recommend that all bids be rejected.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed)

ENOS S. HARDEN.

F. L. EVANS.

J. B. BENNETT.

In accordance with the instructions of the resolution I have the honor to submit herewith, also, copies of all bids or offers of seeds made to this Department in response to its advertisement dated April 27, 1895, or otherwise submitted for its consideration, together with copies of each letter sent to this Department relative to or asking any information concerning or modification of the proposals issued and its reply thereto (Exhibit E). These include all bids which were found deficient in description or otherwise failed to come up to the conditions of the advertisement. In the hope of finding something that would come up to the requirement of the statute the board informally examined all of these bids and made their indorsements upon them which might be "made profitable by frequent changes from one part of our country to another." Had any rare or uncommon seeds or plants "adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interests of horticulture or agriculture throughout the United States" been found, they would have been purchased under the "emergency" plan.

The indorsements of the board show that in the entire list of informal bids and offers no rare or uncommon seeds or plants "adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States" were to be found. In almost every case the offers were of old and well-known things at very extravagant prices. The bids that were received after the 1st of July were also informally examined and nothing was found in them which came within the purport of the statute.

The offer of Mr. C. F. Carpenter, of Bartow, Fla., to furnish one hundred pounds of "teosinte" being of slight novelty, was referred to the Agrostologist of the Department for his consideration with regard to its character under the statutes and its value for general cultivation. This officer reported as follows:

Teosinte.—Illustrated and described in the American Agriculturist for January, 1880, at which time reports were being received in England from a number of its colonies, including the Bahamas and the West Indies, generally South and tropical Africa, and Australia, relative to its growth in these countries. It was noticed in the Southern Cultivator in 1879, and has been repeatedly mentioned in the Southern agricultural journals since that date. Seed was distributed from this Department in 1886, and has been advertised for sale by our leading seedsmen for a number of years past. Teosinte is a subtropical American grass, and has been grown successfully in many parts of the extreme South. It does not mature elsewhere.

It is to be specially noted that none of the bids, either formally or informally made, in connection with the advertisement of the Department of April 27, 1895, or the offers made to this Department in correspondence contain any proposals to supply trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings "adapted to general cultivation, and to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States." Seeds of some such things were offered, but no plants or cuttings were offered by any one. It appears, therefore, that the horticulturists of the country have distributed these things so thoroughly through their regular agencies that nothing of this kind remains to be done by this Department. No plants or cuttings were purchased, therefore, for distribution this year.

As soon as it had been fully ascertained that no seeds, trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings could be obtained for distribution this fiscal year, a brief circular announcing the fact was published and mailed to all persons interested. This circular contains the opinion of the Attorney-General of the United States, the advertisement and the report of the board. It announces in conclusion that in consideration of the failure of the Department to get any seeds or plants under section 527, Revised Statutes, and by the method laid down in section 3709, Revised Statutes, the Seed Division would be abolished with the exception of as many persons connected therewith as would be needed to prepare and distribute Farmers' Bulletins. A copy of this circular is inclosed herewith marked Exhibit G.

ADDENDA.

As an evidence of the fact that recipients of seeds, whether supplied upon the orders of Congressmen or directly from the Department, regarded them simply as a free gift it may be cited that not one in one thousand made any report whatever of the results obtained from the planting of the seed, notwithstanding that all seed sent was accompanied with an explicit request by the Department for such a report. This experience is not that of the present administration only, for, referring to the reports of Chiefs of the Seed Division in former years, complaint is made to the same effect with a statement in some cases that special efforts were put forth to secure a fair average of reports, but without success.

Another remarkable feature of these reports is that no one of them, for several years at least, has pointed out *a single instance of benefit accruing to agriculture from this seed distribution*. So patent was this omission in the reports furnished during Gen. Rusk's administration that while the work of every other division is generally, sometimes highly, commended, not a single reference is to be found in three out of the four reports he presented as to the work of this Division or the subject of seed distribution.

Of the few reports received during the years 1893, 1894, 1895, and 1896 all were so vague and indefinite, in a word, so manifestly perfunctory, as to give no valuable experimental results or information whatever. It may be safely asserted, from all the evidence available in the Department, that for the \$1,100,000 and over expended for seed distribution by the Department in the past ten years no visible practical benefit to general agriculture or horticulture has resulted.

So well is this understood by those who have had occasion to give attention to the matter that not one of the hundreds of papers mostly agricultural, received at the Department has ever printed a single word commendatory of the distribution, while many of them have persistently ridiculed it, and most of them have earnestly condemned it. Grange associations and their officers and other agricultural bodies have adopted resolutions to the same effect.

Should it, however, be deemed wise and expedient to reinstitute the gratuitous distribution of seed at the public expense, the Department should not be made a depot and packing house, but all seed should be purchased already put up in packets and properly labeled by seedsmen. The room required for packing and the skilled labor is not available in the Department, and putting up seed can be made to cost, by the seedsmen themselves, 50 per cent less than it has heretofore cost the Government.

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Contents: Photostat copy of: Seed distribution,
U.S. Dept. of agriculture. Jly.25, 1895.

Typed copy of letter from acting
secretary, May 2, 1896, re. Prohibiting use
of government seed envelopes by unauthorized
parties.

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(See Supt. of Docs. List of publications of the
U.S. Dept. of agriculture, 1862-1902, p. 25,
under Seed, Al. 2 Se 36)

Copy made May 1940 by M. Huddle.

- Prohibiting use of government seed envelopes by
unauthorized parties

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY.

Washington, D. C.,
May 2, 1896.

This Department having learned that requests have been made upon commercial seedsmen for seed put up in papers similar to those used by the Government and printed in simulation thereof, it appears proper to notify all seedsmen, so far as may be possible, that the Department of Agriculture can not permit the Government seed contractors or any seedsmen to sell seed in packets bearing the name of the Department of Agriculture or any words which might cause the receiver of the package to believe that it was a part of the Government seed distribution.

This Department is taking great pains to have all the seed supplied it for this distribution carefully tested, and it is obviously improper for anyone to represent as Government seed any seed not thus inspected, tested, and paid for by this Department.

No seed can be distributed free of postage through the mails except that delivered upon the order of Members of Congress by the Department of Agriculture or sent out direct from this Department. The act of March 3, 1875, confines the franking of seeds by Members of Congress to those seeds which they receive for distribution from the Department of Agriculture.

(Signed) Chas. W. Dabney, Jr.
Acting Secretary.

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Seed Distribution, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The following letter sets forth the present status regarding seed distribution in the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the grounds of the Secretary's action:

Mr. M. E. Fagan,
Chief of the Seed Division.

Washington, D. C., July 25, 1895.

SIR: On or before the 1st day of October, 1895, your executive report for the fiscal year which ended June 30, 1895, must be transmitted to the Secretary of Agriculture.

This report should fully and tersely state in detail the work of the Seed Division during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1895. Among the detailed statements should be the number of packages of seeds sent out from the Department, whom they have been sent out by, where they have been mostly sent, so far as the particular distribution by the Department itself is concerned, and the aggregate weight of all the seeds which have been gratuitously transmitted through the mails of the United States.

Inclosed find a copy of a recent decision of the Attorney-General of the United States, as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
Washington, D. C., April 20, 1895.

THE HONORABLE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge yours of the 18th instant, in which you call my attention to a portion of the act making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1896, and approved March 2, 1895, and running as follows: "Division of Seeds—Purchase and Distribution of Valuable Seeds, and for the Printing, Publication, and Distribution of Farmers' Bulletins: For the Purchase, Propagation, and Distribution, as required by law, of valuable seeds, bulbs, trees, shrubs, vines, cuttings, etc., One Hundred and Eighty Thousand Dollars."

You make two inquiries, as follows:

"Can the Secretary of Agriculture legally purchase any other seeds than those described in Section 527 of the Revised Statutes, to wit, seeds 'rare and uncommon to the country, or such as can be made more profitable by frequent change from one part of our own country to another,' under authority of the Act of March 2, 1895?"

"Would it be proper and lawful for the Secretary of Agriculture, in view of the verbiage of the Act of March 2, 1895, and the wording of Section 527 of the Revised Statutes, to advertise for proposals to furnish the Department of Agriculture seeds, bulbs, trees, vines, cuttings, and plants 'rare and uncommon to the country, and for such as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our own country to another,' reserving the right to reject any and all bids?"

1. The seeds purchasable under the Act of March 2, 1895, are limited to those described in Section 527 of the Revised Statutes—there being no reasonable ground for claiming that the Act of March 2, 1895, operates, or was intended to operate, as a repeal of the earlier statute.

2. If not obligatory upon the Secretary of Agriculture to purchase seeds, trees, etc., conformably to Section 3709 of the Revised Statutes, it is certainly competent for him to make the purchases conformably to said statute, the right to reject any and all bids being reserved. But the form of the question is such that I think it proper to call attention to the fact that while seeds purchased must be such as are "rare and uncommon to the country or such as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our own country to another," the trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings to be purchased are such "as are adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States."

Respectfully yours,

RICHARD OLNEY,
Attorney-General.

This decision precludes the purchase of seeds or distribution, except as provided for by law, in Section 527 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, to wit, seeds "rare and uncommon to the country or such as can be made more profitable by frequent change from one part of our own country to another."

In accord with this decision, the U. S. Department of Agriculture issued the following proposal for bids:

PROPOSALS.—U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, Washington, D. C., April 27, 1895.—In accordance with Section 527 of the Revised Statutes, which authorizes the purchase of "seeds rare and uncommon to the country or such as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our own country to another," also "such trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings as are adapted to general cultivation, and to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States," and in accordance with the terms of the appropriation (Act approved March 2, 1895) for the purchase and distribution of valuable seeds, "as required by law," sealed proposals, in duplicate, subject to the usual conditions, will be received by the Secretary of Agriculture until 2 p. m., July 1, 1895, for supplying to the U. S. Department of Agriculture during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1896, and to be delivered before November 1, 1895, such valuable seeds, trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings, as are covered by Section 527 of the Revised Statutes quoted above. Persons submitting bids should specify the kind and varieties, with full description of each variety, of seeds and plants upon which they desire to submit bids and the quantities they are prepared to contract for, and must guarantee delivery of the same in Washington. The right is reserved to reject any or all bids.

J. STERLING MORTON, Secretary.

There were only three bids made under the above, and they were passed upon and rejected by a committee, as follows:

Washington, D. C., July 6, 1895.

THE HONORABLE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

SIR: The undersigned board appointed by you on July 1, 1895, to open and examine bids for seeds to be furnished this Department for distribution according to law, during the fiscal year ending July 1, 1896, have the honor to report that we have opened and examined the bids received and find that the same do not meet the requirements of the advertisement as printed, and therefore respectfully recommend that all bids be rejected.

Respectfully yours,

[Signed] ENOS S. HARNDEN,
F. L. EVANS,
J. B. BENNETT.

Therefore, in view of the above opinion of the Attorney-General, and because of the result of the advertisement above, which was duly published as provided by law, and in concurrence with the finding of the Committee of Awards upon the bids above referred to, there will be no seeds purchased for gratuitous promiscuous distribution during the fiscal year 1896 by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

In view of the above, you will observe that the necessity of your being continued in office, together with the force immediately under you, will not exist after October 1, 1895, by which date it is demanded that all business of the Seed Division shall have been thoroughly finished up and reported upon.

I should be unjust to you and myself if, in closing, I failed to express my sincere thanks to you for the efficient industry with which you have discharged all the duties pertaining to your laborious and trying position during the last two years. Therefore, very heartily and unreservedly I commend the work which you have superintended with so much good judgment and fidelity, and wish for you employment and success in the future commensurate with your character and ability.

Respectfully yours,

J. Sterling Morton

Secretary.

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